

CLAIMS:

1 1. A method to manage use of a program, comprising:

2 determining whether a monitored program is authorized to execute;

3 measuring a usage time for said monitored program; and

4 sending said usage time to a monitoring program.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said determining comprises:

2 a) receiving a request for authorization to execute from said monitored program;

3 b) authorizing said monitored program to execute for a time interval; and

4 c) sending said time interval to said monitored program.

1 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising repeating operations a) to c)

2 until a terminating event has occurred.

1 4. The method of claim 3, wherein said measuring comprises adding each time

2 interval together to form said usage time once said terminating event has occurred.

1 5. The method of claim 3, wherein said terminating event comprises receiving a

2 message indicating execution has stopped.

1 6. The method of claim 3, wherein said terminating event comprises failure to

2 receive another request for authorization to execute within said time interval.

1 7. The method of claim 2, wherein operations a) and c) are performed using
2 encrypted messages.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein said monitoring program resides at a server, and
2 sending said usage time comprises:

3 requesting a connection to said server;

4 connecting to said server; and

5 sending said usage time to said monitoring program over said connection.

1 9. The method of claim 8, wherein said connection comprises a hypertext transfer
2 protocol connection.

1 10. The method of claim 8, wherein said connection comprises a secure hypertext
2 transfer protocol connection.

1 11. The method of claim 2, wherein said authorizing comprises retrieving said time
2 interval from an authorization table having at least one monitored program and
3 corresponding time interval.

1 12. A method to monitor use of a program, comprising:
2 receiving a usage time for a monitored program over a network connection, said
3 usage time representing a time said monitored program executed with authorization; and
4 reporting said usage time to a user corresponding to said monitored program.

1 13. The method of claim 12, further comprising:

2 determining a cost value associated with said usage time; and
3 sending said cost value to said user.

1 14. The method of claim 12, further comprising sending an authorization table to a
2 managing program, said authorization table having at least one monitored program and a
3 corresponding time interval.

1 15. A method to manage use of a program, comprising:

2 determining whether a monitored program has authorization to execute; and
3 executing said monitored program in accordance with said determination.

1 16. The method of claim 15, wherein said determining comprises:

2 requesting authorization to execute from a managing program; and
3 receiving authorization to execute from said managing program.

1 17. The method of claim 16, further comprising sending a termination message to
2 said managing program.

1 18. The method of claim 15, wherein said determining comprises:

2 requesting authorization to execute from a managing program; and
3 failing to receive authorization to execute from said managing program within a
4 predetermined time period.

1 19. The method of claim 18, further comprising terminating execution of said
2 monitored program.

1 20. A method to monitor use of a program, comprising:
2 determining whether a monitored program is authorized to execute;
3 measuring a usage time associated with said monitored program;
4 reporting to a monitoring program said usage time; and
5 receiving said usage time at said monitoring program.

1 21. The method of claim 20, wherein said determining comprises:
2 requesting authorization to execute a monitored program;
3 authorizing said execution for a time interval; and
4 determining whether said monitored program has executed for said time interval.

1 22. An article comprising:
2 a storage medium;
3 said storage medium including stored instructions that, when executed by a
4 processor, result in determining whether a monitored program is authorized to execute,
5 measuring a usage time for said monitored program, and sending said usage time to a
6 monitoring program.

1 23. The article of claim 22, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a
2 processor, further result in determining whether a monitored program is authorized to

3 execute by receiving a request for authorization to execute from said monitored program,
4 authorizing said monitored program to execute for a time interval, and sending said time
5 interval to said monitored program.

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1 24. The article of claim 22, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a
2 processor, further result in sending said usage time by requesting a connection to said
3 server, connecting to said server, and sending said usage time to said monitoring program
4 over said connection.

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1 25. The article of claim 22, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a
2 processor, further result in connecting to said server using a hypertext transfer protocol
3 connection.

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1 26. The article of claim 22, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a
2 processor, further result in connecting to said server using a secure hypertext transfer
3 protocol connection.

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1 27. An article comprising:
2 a storage medium;
3 said storage medium including stored instructions that, when executed by a
4 processor, result in receiving a usage time for a monitored program over a network
5 connection, said usage time representing a time said monitored program executed with

6 authorization, and reporting said usage time to a user corresponding to said monitored
7 program.

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1 28. The article of claim 27, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a
2 processor, further result in determining a cost value associated with said usage time, and
3 sending said cost value to said user.

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1 29. The article of claim 28, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a
2 processor, further result in sending an authorization table to a managing program, said
3 authorization table having at least one monitored program and a corresponding time
4 interval.

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1 30. An article comprising:
2 a storage medium;
3 said storage medium including stored instructions that, when executed by a
4 processor, result in determining whether a monitored program has authorization to
5 execute, and executing said monitored program in accordance with said determination.

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1 31. The article of claim 30, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a
2 processor, further result in determining whether a monitored program has authorization to
3 execute by requesting authorization to execute from a managing program, and
4 receiving authorization to execute from said managing program.

1 32. An article comprising:

2 a storage medium;

3 said storage medium including stored instructions that, when executed by a
4 processor, result in determining whether a monitored program is authorized to execute,
5 measuring a usage time associated with said monitored program, reporting to a
6 monitoring program said usage time, and receiving said usage time at said monitoring
7 program.

1 33. The article of claim 32, wherein the stored instructions, when executed by a
2 processor, further result in determining whether a monitored program has authorization to
3 execute by requesting authorization to execute a monitored program, authorizing said
4 execution for a time interval, and determining whether said monitored program has
5 executed for said time interval.